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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: SPANISH ENVOY RAISES PROPERTY RIGHTS WITH FM MADURO

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Dan Lawton, Reasons 1.4 (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Spain's Secretary of State for Iberoamerica, Trinidad Jimenez, visited Caracas October 31. In addition to a lengthy meeting with Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro, she met President Chavez, leaders from political parties (PODEMOS, Accion Democratica, Primero Justicia, Un Nuevo Tiempo and COPEI) as well as managers of Spanish multi-national businesses. The bulk of the meeting with FM Maduro reportedly focused on land invasion and squatting. Spain has at least 100 outstanding land seizure cases, mostly involving dual national Spaniard-Venezuelans. Chavez's proposed constitutional amendments redefining the terms of property may have prompted the Jimenez to visit now.
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Trinidad Jimenez, Spain's Secretary of State (Assistant Secretary equivalent) for Iberoamerica, visited Venezuela October 30-31 for a whirlwind series of meetings. Her long meeting with Venezuelan FM Maduro reportedly covered bilateral and multilateral relationships as well as constitutional reforms. The bulk of her visit was devoted to promoting the property rights of Spanish nationals whose land has been occupied by squatters. Only 11 of more than 100 land disputes dating from January 2005, usually involving dual Spanish/Venezuelan nationals, have been resolved to date. Following the land rights discussion which Venezuelan FM Maduro called "productive", Jimenez expressed her gratitude for BRV's "serious and responsible attitude" on the issue, and explained the Spanish government's obligation to defend the interests of its 150,000 citizens in Venezuela to the press.

¶3. (C) Jimenez's agenda also included a brief meeting with President Chavez, which the BRV described as cordial. Local media also reported that prior to seeing Chavez, leaders of the opposition political parties Accion Democratica, Primero Justicia, Un Nuevo Tiempo and COPEI outlined their concerns to her over possible constitutional reforms at the Spanish Embassy, as did the pro-government party PODEMOS. Opposition party members told PolCouns that although Jimenez expressed sympathy with the parties over their concerns with constitutional changes, she made no commitments regarding any statements she might make to President Chavez or other government officials. Jimenez later met with managers of the Spanish multinational banks BBVA and Santander in addition to Telefonica and petroleum giant Repsol.

¶4. (C) Comment: The visit by Secretary of State Jimenez was likely at least partially due to the Spanish government's desire to support Spanish citizens and multinational firms facing a redefinition of property from the BRV's proposed constitutional reforms. The BRV has characterized the visit

as consultation prior to the November 8 Iberoamerican summit
in Chile.

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